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## ***Rally Against Huge Damage Award***

### **Scientologists Cast Protest as Defense of All Religion**

By PETER H. KING, *Times Staff Writer*

PORTLAND, Ore.—Duane Wolcott lives at a Christian church here, earning his keep as a custodian. He describes his principal occupation, however, as "street evangelist," and it is his belief that this week the mysterious hand of God tossed him a terrific career opportunity.

The burly 49-year-old could be found at a park by the Willamette River, happily passing out Christian pamphlets to Scientologists attending a free concert by one of their own, jazz musician Chick Corea.

"We feel God has given us this opportunity," Wolcott said. "I'll tell you. There are about 30 or 40 Christians from various churches

working this crowd right now. We have a desperate call out for more tracts; we are running out of them. We see this as a wonderful opportunity to tell these people about Jesus, and that is what we are doing."

The Scientologists, of course, did not share Wolcott's view of themselves as potential converts, although in this of all weeks they certainly would not challenge his right to try.

They have come to Portland, they have stated, to save the U.S. Constitution, specifically its First Amendment promise of freedom of religion.

The Scientologists, many of them from Los Angeles, began

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# PROTEST: Scientology Rally in Oregon

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gathering Saturday, the day after a Multnomah County jury awarded an ex-Scientologist \$39 million in damages from the church and its now reclusive founder, science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard. The plaintiff alleged that she had been defrauded with a promise that Scientology courses and counseling sessions would improve her eyesight and "communication skills."

Scientology leaders have cast the case as a devastating assault on the First Amendment, and they call religious freedom "the movement of the '80s." Clearly, they want to be seen as being in the vanguard of that movement and to receive the stamp of legitimacy that the company of mainstream religions would confer.

"This case is arousing . . . immediate and intense alarm for two reasons," the Scientologists said in an open letter delivered Tuesday to Gov. Victor G. Atiyeh and Oregon legislators. "First and most obvious is the wholly unreasonable and blatantly excessive monetary award. The second reason is more far reaching and far more damaging. This case strikes at the very heart of the dearly held American concept of free religious practice."

Initially, organizers of the protest claimed that it would be of Woodstock proportions. So far, though, the Scientologists have been unable to muster more than 2,000 members at any event, and the leadership is revising earlier predictions, indicating that it would be pleased with a showing of 10,000 by week's end. They expect to stay here until at least early next week, when the judge must decide whether to approve the verdict.

If the Scientologists have been short on bodies, they have marshaled their troops with a flair for maximum exposure. They have picketed the Multnomah County Courthouse every morning and held vigils every night. They have sung countless renditions of "We Shall Overcome," listened to a succession of show business performers and, in a one-day side trip to Salem on Tuesday, marched on the state Capitol, presenting a rather baffled-looking receptionist in the governor's office with a thick stack of letters.

Throughout the week, the Scientologists have skillfully rationed a handful of celebrities. Actor John Travolta flew up for a press conference Monday morning, saying that in his 10 years as a Scientologist "I've never had to come out like

this to stand for what I believe in . . . and I certainly believe in Scientology." Travolta flew off shortly after the 1 a.m. press conference.

Corea, who reportedly canceled a concert in Japan to come here, was the star of Monday night. "If we let this one slide," he said at his press conference, "it would seem to me it would just be down hill from there as far as maintaining any religious freedom in this country."

Attorneys for plaintiff Julie Christofferson Titchbourne, now 27 but a 17-year-old when she spent nine months in the organization, have characterized the matter as a cut-and-dried case of secular fraud. According to the lawsuit, the Scientologists "were in the business of providing goods and services to be used in certain self-improvement courses." Failure to provide those goods and services, Titchbourne's lawyers successfully asserted, left the Scientologists legally exposed.

## Getting Rid of 'Engrams'

Scientologists believe that, through a process called "auditing," which involves a regimen of questioning and the use of an electronic measuring device called the E-meter, humans can rid their "reactive mind" of "engrams."

Engrams are impressions recorded at times of trauma in this life or in previous lives. They return in similar moments of stress to the detriment of the person's behavior. Scientologists believe that removing engrams from the reactive mind allows the "analytic mind" to function unhindered. A person who has been cleansed of engrams is called a "clear."

The theory was formulated by Hubbard, author of "Typewriter in the Sky" and other works of science fiction, in addition to books about his mind science, called Dianetics.

Although \$20 million in punitive damages was levied against Hubbard by the jury here, he was not present during the trial and, in fact, has not been seen in public for several years.

But, if Hubbard was not present in body, he was here in other ways. Stories were told about past Hubbard victories, and Hubbard utterances were recollected. A bust of him was kept at stage front during rallies.

Titchbourne had been awarded \$2 million in 1979, but the state Court of Appeal overturned the decision, saying that the courts

should address only non-religious activities of the Scientologists.

After another 10-week trial, jurors affirmed that the Scientology courses offered to Titchbourne were "offered to her on a wholly non-religious basis." They ruled also that fraud had occurred, along with "wanton misconduct."

General damages of \$3,203.20 were awarded, along with \$39 million in punitive damages.

Scientology leaders contend that it was wrong to ask a jury to decide what was religious and what was secular. They argued that, as a result, their religious beliefs essentially were put on trial.

Some experts in church-state law interviewed this week agreed. "It's a monstrous injustice," said Franklin Littell, a professor of religion at Temple University and a Methodist clergyman. "It's an effort to kill the Church of Scientology, and it shouldn't have been in the court in the first place."

However, the Jewish-Christian Assn. of Oregon, representing 13 Christian denominations and most Jewish congregations and associations, on Wednesday issued a statement saying that the Constitution "does not grant any organization or other religious groups the right to act irresponsibly or in violation of the legal right of others."

John Peterson, a Scientology attorney, said that a motion for mistrial would be filed with Circuit Court Judge Donald Londer on Friday.

Some lawyers pointed out that this state has had dealings, at times with great acrimony, with followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, and they interpreted the large punitive award as a possible backlash against unorthodox religion in general.

Oregonians seem to have taken the presence of the Scientologists in stride. The Scientologists have applied for and received numerous permits in conjunction with their activities.

Police presence has been kept at a minimum, although the Scientologists seem inundated with their own security personnel, all of whom are equipped with walkie talkies.

There have been few incidents, an exception occurring on the steps of the state Capitol Tuesday, when a man in a motorized wheelchair cut a swath through the assembled Scientologists.

As state police escorted him away, he kept shouting: "They aren't even from Oregon!"